



Norfolk Island | Issue no. 27 | 2 October 2024

Administrator's update



After being in this role for over a year, it becomes obvious that there are groups of organisations comprising businesses, not-for-profit and volunteer organisations that are essential to living on our island. We intend to have the leaders of all these organisations for a BBQ and opportunity to share their successes and the challenges they face. Last week we had the service organisations assisting from the young through to the elderly. It was a great event and Meliame and I look forward to similarly having the opportunity to talk to the other groups over the summer.

Last month I had the opportunity to meet with Allan Jones who was here as the Regional Director from Queensland Department of Education. Allan told me how impressed he was with our school and how effective the transition has been from NSW to Queensland. This year will be the first cohort of children going through the Queensland QCE and I look forward to talking to them next month.

I have also had some very good meetings regarding to the island's infrastructure requirements. The main agencies with public infrastructure requirements are keen to work together to develop local capability to deliver major infrastructure projects on-island. I look forward to doing whatever I can to facilitate this objective.

Finally, Spring is here! The flying-ants have been and it is looking dry. As I write this we might get some rain next week. It is a good time to make sure your gutters are clean and you are able to catch every drop that falls.

BUILDING OUR FUTURE - INVESTING IN OUR LOCAL VET SECTOR

I recently had the pleasure of presenting one of our local young people, Jordan Godfrey-Bigg, with his hard-earned Certificate III in Carpentry at the Knowledge and Learning Centre. With this nationally recognised certification, Jordan is now a qualified carpenter, and thanks to his hard work and dedication, can now use these skills alongside his employer Mick at MJ Bruce Constructions here on island.

While it was Jordan who put in the hard yards for this well-earned qualification, I'm sure he would join me in acknowledging the Vocational Education and Training (VET) opportunities and structural support we have in place here on island.

This includes the strong collaboration between the Australian and Queensland Governments to enhance VET outcomes and support for Norfolk Island residents.

In November 2022, the Queensland Government through the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) commenced the registration and management of new apprenticeship and traineeship contracts for Norfolk Island residents. This means our young people like Jordan and the 19 others participating in active training contracts for apprentices and trainees on Norfolk Island can gain skills and qualifications in their chosen professions without having to leave their community.

The Queensland Government extended its support for VET in 2023 to include school-based students. The implementation of a VET in school program at Norfolk Island Central School now offers students the opportunity to engage in school-based VET study, including school-based traineeships and apprenticeships.

Since January 2019, the Australian Government, through its delivery partner Asuria, has been administering the Norfolk Island VET Financial Assistance Initiative. This significantly improves access to quality VET opportunities for Norfolk Island residents by subsidising the course fees, including travel and accommodation costs, incurred by residents studying at TAFE or other VET institutions. To date, 73 Norfolk Island residents have benefited from this initiative.

A strong, agile and modern VET sector is vital for the future of our community, building not only individual success for our bright, ambitious islanders, but economic growth and the development of our island as a whole.

Congratulations to Jordan and to all the other locals who are currently working for a qualification – and thanks to the local employers supporting them to gain their trades.



Newsletter

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Learn more about avian influenza

High pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), also known as bird flu, is a viral disease of birds. Not only are wild, migratory birds vulnerable to avian influenza, but also domesticated bird species, such as chickens, turkeys and ducks. Outbreaks overseas of a new strain of bird flu, H5N1 HPAI, have led to extensive losses of poultry, and mass mortalities of wild birds and mammals, particularly marine mammals and mammals that prey or scavenge on birds.

While Australia and Norfolk Island are currently free from the H5N1 HPAI strain, there is a risk it may arrive as migratory species begin to return to their local summer breeding and feeding grounds. Rapid detection and response will be vital for containing any outbreaks that could likely be transmitted to other bird species, including our local poultry flocks.

Two veterinary officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will be on island from 8-17 October, and will be holding presentations on the risk of bird flu to Norfolk Island, and what the community can do to help manage potential outbreaks. of bird flu to Norfolk Island, and what the community can do to help manage potential outbreaks.

The presentations will be held at the Knowledge and Learning Centre on **Thursday 10 October at 5pm and Tuesday 15 October, 5pm**. We encourage anyone who is interested to attend these sessions. In the meantime, please avoid contact with sick or dead birds and report any unusual sightings to NIRC Customer Care



(0100) or Norfolk Island National Park (53218) or call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888. For those participating in Whale Bird egg collection, please wash or sanitise your hands after handling eggs. While the new bird flu strain has not been detected on Norfolk Island, we encourage this extra precaution.

25 years of proudly supporting the Norfolk Island community

For 25 years, the Norfolk Island RSL Day Club – White Oaks has been a staple of our community, offering a place for locals to come together for games, adventures and I suspect a little bit of mischief, over a cuppa, every Thursday morning.

As part of their 25-year celebrations, we welcomed the ladies to Government House for a morning tea. We always enjoy our catch-ups with community groups who not only provide a place for fun and friendship, but are also pillars of support to each other and members of the community in need. Thank you to everyone involved in putting on the morning tea, and happy 25th birthday to White Oaks!



Not-for-profit and service organisations

As mentioned in my message, last week we celebrated the not-for-profit and service organisations on Island with an afternoon BBQ at Government House.

It was fantastic to acknowledge so many dedicated local people working tirelessly to improve the lives of our most vulnerable. Their passion and commitment to helping others is commendable.

It was a great opportunity to show our deep appreciation to those that are often forgotten or taken for granted. It was a spectacular afternoon to watch the sunset and celebrate with friends.



Staff changes at the Department

The past few weeks have seen a number of changes for the Territories Division in Canberra.

After four years leading the Territories Division as First Assistant Secretary, Sarah Vandebroek has moved on to a new role in the department. I know many of you have met and worked with Sarah over the years and will join me in thanking her for the contributions she made, most significantly in civic participation and governance. I wish her all the very best in the next stage of her remarkable career.

Kim Forbes has stepped into the role as First Assistant Secretary, and I have no doubt that her wealth of experience, expertise and enthusiasm will be a huge asset to our community.

We also welcome Charles Brister into the role of operations director here on island.